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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR FEBRUARY 02, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for February 02, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

HURRIYET: The draft report prepared by the Turkish Parliamentary Commission for Honor Killings sparked a debate at the Turkish Parliament. CHP (Republican People Party) members claimed that the recommendations section of the report did not sufficiently address the issue of feudal family structures and honor killings.

HURRIYET: The court reached a verdict about twenty-four defendants including former DEHAP (Democratic People's Party) mayors of Diyarbakir, Siirt, Batman and Bingol provinces, who have been on trial for six years on charges of establishing contact with Murat Karayilan, a senior leader of PKK/Kongra-Gel, in Holland and granting some of the state resources allocated to the municipalities to the PKK. Former Batman Mayor Abdullah Akin, former Siirt Mayor Selim Ozalp, former Bingol mayors Feyzullah Karaaslan and Selahattin Ertas, have been acquitted in the case. Files of former Diyarbakir Mayor Feridun Celik and the other 13 defendants have been closed due to the statute of limitations. A PKK defector has been sentenced to 2 years and one month in prison. Four other defendants have been sentenced to 7.5 years in prison.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Turkish Parliament's Commission Probing the Semdinli Case has reportedly focused its attention to the alleged links of non-Commissioned Officer Ali Kaya with the 1996 Susurluk case when a car accident in Susurluk revealed the scandalous links of a politician, a police chief and a mafia leader in Turkey. The commission will reportedly hear statements from Kutlu Savas, former Inspection Board Chairperson of the Prime Minister's Office, who created a report on the Susurluk case then.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Frequently occurring power outages in Van's Bostanici quarter have been causing serious inconveniences for the dwellers of the area.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Alevis, as required by their ritual obligations, have started a 12-day fasting term in the month of Muharram. In Tunceli, a province densely populated by Alevis, some of the food selling stores and diners will stay closed during the interval which commemorates the assassination of Caliph Hussein in the Karbala desert. The fasting period is called Twelve Imam Fasting.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The daily claims that reported evidence has been disclosed on alleged negligence on the part of the health authorities in Van for covering up the cause of the deaths of two children, who were transferred from Agri province's Dogubeyazit when bird-flu broke out in the district. According to the daily, Van Centennial University's Research Hospital said that there was no bird flu in the children; however, the hospital procedures ordering burial of the children stated the cause of the death as bird flu.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Twelve people in Iraq have been hospitalized and their cases are suspected as bird flu. Separately, unusual chicken deaths observed a week ago in Elazig's Keban district and tests confirming bird flu in the birds have caused the authorities to impose quarantines in the district and start culling birds. Moreover, four small children suspected as having contracted bird flu in Agri's Buyukagadeve village have been transferred to the hospital in Erzurum.

OZGUR GUNDEM: PKK Chief Headquarters reportedly issued a public statement to pay condolences to the family of the Nakshibendi Sheikh from Batman, Suleyman Bagdu (55), who was killed in an ambush on the Batman-Siirt road yesterday (January 31, 2006) at 3.30 p.m. The assailants using automatic guns left 26 bullet marks on the jeep and wounded five others. In addition to the sheikh, Abdullatif Engin, who was in the jeep and heavily wounded, also lost his life. The sheikh's relatives and followers rushed to the hospital after the assassination. The Batman Security Director, Arif Oksuz, announced that the incident was not of political nature, and that the incident was being investigated.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Artist Ferhat Tunc, who was invited by the Danish Parliament to deliver a speech in the parliament (see

press summary 01/30), gave a small concert in the parliament following his speech and was given a standing ovation by the parliamentarians. Ferhat Tunc has been on trial in Turkey under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code for writing an article for Ozgur Gundem which reportedly used a two-word term in Turkish which is equivalent of "deeper unlawful structures rooted in the (Turkish) judiciary".

OZGUR GUNDEM: Mothers for Peace Initiative members in Van and Diyarbakir ended the strike they started on January 20 to extend support to Abdullah Ocalan. Meanwhile, fifteen members of the Democratic People's Initiative launched a rolling strike in Mardin's Derik district to protest the procedures applied in Imrali Prison that reportedly paved the way for to the "isolation" of Abdullah Ocalan in the prison on the island. Moreover, 18 people in Adana started a hunger strike on the same grounds in Adana's Human Rights Association. Separately, Mus Democratic People's Initiative members staged a march in the province and police intervened without warning the crowd in advance.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Greens Party in Sweden condemned Turkey's efforts to black out pro-PKK Roj TV. Meanwhile, Kurdish Writers' Association condemned the investigation started against 56 mayor of the southeastern region from DTP (Democratic Society Party) who sent a letter to the Danish Prime Minister not to block the broadcasting of Roj TV.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Following the meeting held in Yuregir district of Adana, Ziya Aydemir has been assigned as the Adana DTP provincial chairperson once again.

OZGUR GUNDEM: A long queue of trucks piled up at the Habur border again. Truck drivers are reportedly suffering from the slowness of the border operations, a situation which is reportedly caused by the insufficient number of personnel at the gate.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The court, which brought action against attorney Hasip Kaplan decided to discontinue the lawsuit against Kaplan when forensic medicine authorities found out that the man in a photograph posing with Murat Karayilan, a senior leader of PKK/Kongra-Gel, was not Hasip Kaplan. The photograph, which was reportedly taken in the Qandil Mountains, was found on a captured PKK member.

EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM: Workers in Batman's Tekel Cigarette Factory staged a protest against the privatization policies adopted by the government and laid a black wreath in front of the provincial AKP (Justice and Development Party) premise. Meanwhile, workers in Diyarbakir Tekel Cigarette Factory extended support to the workers in Batman by paying a visit to the Batman workers with a 50-person delegation.

EVRENSEL: Turkish Parliamentary Commission Probing Semdinli Case heard statements from Tacettin Aslan, Semdinli Security Director. Aslan reportedly said that they did not have any intelligence information about Seferi Yilmaz, owner of the bombed Umut Bookstore in Semdinli; but, they had received a tip-off that a package would be received (by unspecified persons at an unspecified place.) According to Aslan, when they heard the explosion, they were in the midst of a meeting. Aslan further said that he went to the site of the incident and saw that people were throwing stones at a car and a man (PKK defector Veysel Ates) was sitting in the car. Aslan claimed that no armored vehicle opened fire at the people who held demonstrations following the incident. Aslan confirmed firing into air by officers standing on the vehicle.

SABAH (GUNEY) / EKSPRES / HURRIYET (CUKUROVA) / BOLGE: To revive the poultry sector in Adana, Adana Municipality and owners of poultry integrated plants will hold a picnic on February 4 on one of the old bridges over the Seyhan river, and chicken will be the main dish of this activity.

YENI SAFAK: Mustafa Eraslan, attorney of Abdullah Ocalan, said that retrial process of Abdullah Ocalan has started following his clients application to the Ankara 11th Heavy Penalty Court. However, article 311 of the Turkish Penal Code was still posing an impediment concerning the retrial process of Ocalan.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

SABAH (GUNEY) / EKSPRES / HURRIYET (CUKUROVA) / BOLGE: Fifteen CHP (Republican People's Party) deputies, who established a commission to study the problems of citrus fruit farmers, have been holding a series of meetings with citrus fruit producers in various regions of Turkey. The last meeting was held in Adana. The CHP deputies, while they distributed the citrus fruit, which farmers were not able to sell, to people in the street for free, protested the government for neglecting the problems of the citrus fruit farmers.

12. SABAH (GUNEY): CHP deputies extended support to the businessmen Bulent Ozulku who announced that he could buy the TEKEL Cigarette Factory if the government decides to privatize

the premise.
REID